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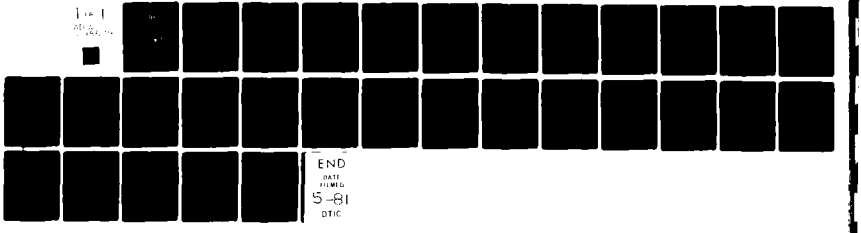

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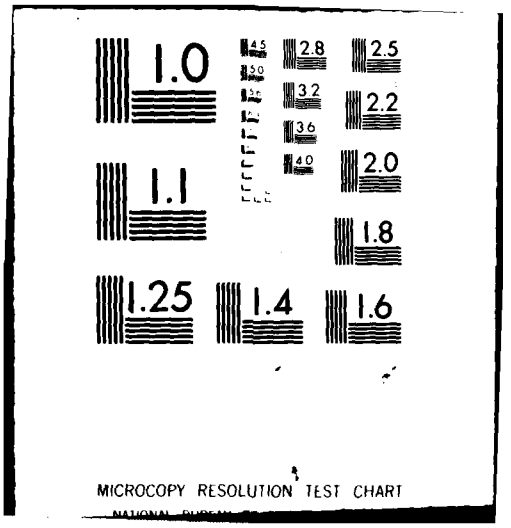
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AFRICA AND CHANGE

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AFRICA AND CHANGE

by

Robert J. Lilley

16 March 1981

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Composition of this memorandum was accomplished by Mrs. Karen K. Bailey.

FOREWORD

This memorandum examines the dynamics of change in the African context. The author analyzes present trends and projects these trends through the decade of the 1980's which will be a time of increasing economic woes and political instability throughout the African continent. The author sees three issues which will impact upon US interests in the coming decade: the expansion of East-West competition to Africa, racial confrontation in South Africa, and access to resources. He concludes that the United States must close the current gap in US policy toward Africa and take the initiative in resolving the dangerous issues which lie ahead.

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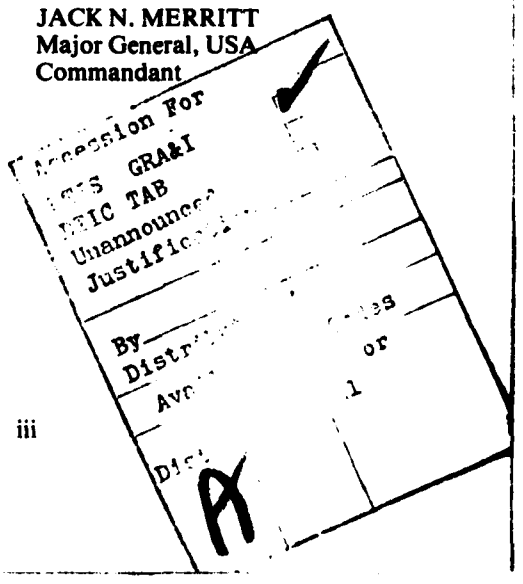
This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.

JACK N. MERRITT
Major General, USA
Commandant



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT J. LILLEY has been assigned to the Strategic Studies Institute since October 1979. A graduate of the US Military Academy, he holds a master's degree in African history from Northwestern University. He is a member of the Foreign Area Officers Program specializing in sub-Saharan Africa. He has been assigned in this capacity on the Department of Army Staff and, more recently, as an instructor at the US Army Command and General Staff College.

SUMMARY

Change has been a common aspect of the African scene for centuries and will continue to be so in the future. While it is impossible to predict the future of Africa with great accuracy, there are certain trends which paint a bleak picture for the coming decade.

In the political realm, authoritarian forms of government, military or otherwise, will be commonplace. The coup will be a frequent mechanism for changes in government. Succession crises will occur in several countries whose aging founders must soon depart the scene. These trends will be exacerbated by the continued existence of tribalism which will result in civil wars, secession attempts, and irredentist conflict.

Economically, population pressures, urbanization, food production shortfalls, and natural disasters will periodically erupt into conflict between the "haves" and "have nots," both within a country and among different countries.

Expanding military capabilities and loosening of past inhibitions against cross-border military interventions will greatly increase the scope, duration, and lethality of future conflicts, whatever the original cause.

Superimposed on these trends are international issues which will impact on the security interests of the United States. These are the expansion of East-West competition to the African continent, the threat of violent racial confrontation in Southern Africa, and access to the the strategic resources of Africa. All of these issues have the potential for embroiling the superpowers in internal African conflicts and possibly against each other.

At the present time, the United States appears to be losing the initiative in Africa to the Soviet Union because of the lack of a cohesive, consistent African policy. It is imperative that the United States close the policy gap and begin taking the initiative in helping to resolve the dangerous issues ahead rather than reacting to Soviet openings as has been the case over the past few years. These policies must stress political and economic solutions, for it is the development of stable economic and political institutions in Africa which will eventually reverse the ominous trends predicted for this decade.

AFRICA AND CHANGE

"Ex Africa semper aliquid novi."
(Something new is always coming from Africa)
Pliny The Elder

Even the most cursory scanning of today's newspapers reaffirms the introductory quote from Roman times. The "something new" may be as cosmetic as a change in the name of an African capital, e.g. Leopoldville to Kinshasa. Or, it may be as dramatic and revolutionary as the Angolan Civil War. The dramatic success of the Lancaster House Agreement leading to the transition of Ian Smith's breakaway white settler regime in Southern Rhodesia into the independent, black-ruled nation of Zimbabwe and the sudden, violent overthrow of the black settler government in Liberia by an Army Master Sergeant are but two examples. In other words, something new is still coming out of Africa in the 1980's. As former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Stephen B. Cohen stated:

> Africa today is marked by constant change. Rapid urbanization, and shocks of higher energy prices, unstable commodity markets and political upheavals are affecting peoples throughout the continent. In this environment, it is a profound mistake to confuse rigid adherence to the status quo with genuine stability. The world is changing too rapidly for that.[1]

There is no reason to doubt that change will continue to affect Africa for the next two decades, and undoubtedly beyond. Unfortunately, a paper on change implies a certain clairvoyance on the part of the writer, and as I. William Zartman points out in his contribution to *Africa In The 1980's: A Continent in Crisis,* "Africa has thus far fared rather poorly at the hands of those who would tell its future."[2] The futurist dealing with Africa is hampered further by the fact that there are two types of change operating on the continent. One is the sudden change that cannot be readily pinpointed as to a specific time or place. The military coup is an example of such a change. While one can predict with confidence that military coups will occur in Africa during the coming decade, it is virtually impossible to ascertain which country will be struck next and when. Even a current intelligence analyst may have difficulty in predicting an imminent coup more than two or three days before the fact. The second type is evolutionary change in which the ultimate result is known, but not the process. For example, it is safe to say that majority rule will eventually be achieved in the Republic of South Africa, but whether the process will be peaceful or violent, lengthy or short is clearly unknown.

With the above caveats in mind, this paper will attempt to predict what the author sees as the likely changes which will occur in Africa during the 1980-90 time frame. It will examine the political, economic, and military dimensions of these changes, the international implications, and the potential impact on the United States in terms of both the East-West and North-South axes. The first section of the paper will briefly outline past changes; the second section will identify present trends as derived from the past; and the final section will attempt to extrapolate these trends as they will impact on the key issues for the 1980's.

THE PAST AS PROLOGUE

Change in Africa has been most evident in the political realm with the advent of independence in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Prior to 1957 there were only eight independent countries on the African continent, namely Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, the Republic of South Africa, the Sudan and Tunisia. (Notice that the majority of these are Arab states of North Africa.) Roughly two decades later the count now stands at 52 sovereign,

independent states. As the former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Bruce Palmer, Jr. has written: "No comparable political transformation in such a compressed period of time has ever occurred before in the history of the world."[3]

This rapid, dramatic transformation led to a period of optimism in the early 1960's concerning the future of independent Africa. This optimism, however, was shortlived as violence and repression quickly erupted throughout the continent. As it was described in 1969 in a study prepared for the Council on Foreign Relations:

> In the late 1950's and early 1960's, the new-born African states took their place in the world in an atmosphere of excitement and exuberance. For both the brown and the black people of the huge continent the ending of colonial status after decades and in some cases centuries of subjugation was an event of profoundly felt emotional and spiritual importance. A large part of a vast continent had been reborn, and it began as the young fortunately do, not in cynicism, despair, or hostility but in hope and idealism. Yet within a decade a striking reversal of expectations and mood has occurred.[4]

The first of the changes which led to increased pessimism was the rise of authoritarianism in the guise of the one-party state or in the form of military dictatorship. Almost invariably the original independence governments were democratic, formed by nationalist leaders who had the support of the majority of their peoples. In many cases and for a variety of reasons, democracy lasted only a few years—in some cases only a few months—being replaced by a formal, single party system based on varying degrees of authoritarianism. In some cases, this transition was accomplished peacefully; in others by repression and even the death of opposition leaders.

The basic justification for the rise of one-party states was that since newly-won independence was so fragile and the problems of development so massive, the nation's energy should not be dissipated by political squabbling and in-fighting. Rather a unified party was required to lead, and direct if necessary, the country to modernization. President Julius Nyrere of Tanzania summed up this trend toward one-party states as follows:

> The British and American tradition of a two-party system is a reflection of the society from which it evolved. The existence of distinct classes and the struggle between them resulted in the growth of this system. In Africa the Nationalist movements were fighting a battle for freedom from foreign

> domination, not from domination by any ruling class of our own. Once the foreign power—'the other party'—has been expelled, there is no ready-made division among the people. The Nationalist movements must inevitably form the first governments of the new states. Once a free government is formed, its supreme task lies ahead—the building up of the country's economy. This, no less than the struggle against colonialism, calls for the maximum united effort by the whole country if it is to succeed. There can be no room for difference or division.[1]

While not all the one-party states reverted to complete authoritarian rule (some were quite democratic within the single party structure), they were, nonetheless, unsettling to the Western world as something less than participatory democracies. And, of course, the rise of such tyrants as Idi Amin in Uganda, Macias Nguema in Equatorial Guinea, and Emperor Bokassa I in the Central African Empire heightened Western suspicions of the so-called one-party state.

The military *coup d' etat* also contributed to the growth of authoritarian rule in Africa. In those instances where one-party states were not yet established, military takeovers provided reasonable facsimiles. (In some cases, in fact, the military regime has gradually become institutionalized, formed its own political party, and governs today in a quasi-civilian mode, such as in Zaire). Even the more authoritarian, one-party regimes were not immune to the sudden *coup d' etat*, nor were the military regimes themselves. A rough guess is that there have been around 50 successful *coups* and probably an equal number of unsuccessful attempts, both bloody and bloodless. While a large body of literature has been accumulated concerning military interventions in Africa, no one has yet been able to develop a predictive model or preventive remedy for the coup. While some coups have been beneficial to the countries in which they have occurred, the majority would appear detrimental to orderly political and economic development. In any case, they represent a precipitous change with serious internal repercussions, especially in view of the current American interest in human rights.

Closely allied to concern over the growth of authoritarian regimes was the concern, especially on the part of the United States, that the nonaligned stance adopted by the majority of African states was in reality a poorly disguised alliance with the Communist bloc as these countries increasingly embraced various forms of "African socialism." In theory this trend was a natural

reaction to years of European colonial rule. As the distinguished African scholar, Ali Mazrui, points out:

> In the face of this massive presence of alien civilizations, especially European civilization in the lives of Africans, it is more than understandable that many Africans should seek to rebel against this dependency and assert a military autonomy.[6]

In practice, although their proclamations of socialism were probably more rhetoric than substance, they did raise the spectre of Communist domination of the continent. This was true in the early 1960's with Soviet meddling in the Congo crisis and their large presence in Guinea, Ghana, and Mali and perhaps more true today given the Soviet presence in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and elsewhere.

Severe acts of ethnic violence added to the growing sense of pessimism over the future of Africa. In 1959, 20,000 were killed in Rwanda as a result of ethnic cleavages. Another 100,000 were killed in Burundi in 1972 for the same reasons. Civil wars raged in the Congo (Zaire) from 1960 to 1964, the Sudan from 1955 to 1972, and Nigeria from 1967 to 1970. Similar wars continue today in Angola, Chad, Western Sahara, and Ethiopia. Border wars have been fought between Morocco and Algeria in 1964, between Ethiopia and Somalia periodically since the early 1960's, and between Tanzania and Uganda in 1977. The list of violence is limitless. It was often difficult for Americans to understand the depth of such ethnic or tribal tensions in what they perceived to be a homogeneous society. Ali Mazrui provides an interesting, although grim, analogy with the events of My Lai:

> It is not an exaggeration to say that African culture groups can at times see themselves as no less different from each other than Americans saw the Vietnamese. The ease with which some American military personnel could commit atrocities such as My Lai arose out of a cultural disturbance between themselves and their victims great enough to result in a certain degree of dehumanization. Many African communities, though forced by the colonial experience to share the same borders, feel virtually as distant from some of their compatriots as those involved at My Lai.[7]

Finally, hopes for the speedy liberation of the white-dominated, southern tier of Africa were dashed by the obstinacy of the Portuguese, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Rhodesia in 1965 (as well as Great Britain's reluctance to use force

against the rebellion), and the refusal of the Republic of South Africa to terminate its League of Nations mandate in Namibia (Southwest Africa) or to ameliorate its repressive policy of apartheid within its own borders. Ultimately the Portuguese colonies and Rhodesia received their independence after several years of insurgencies, but majority rule in Namibia and South Africa is still in a state of limbo.

On the economic front, the outlook was also exceedingly bleak as the euphoria of independence receded and economic realities hit home. As Phillippe Lemaitre described the economic situation in Africa during the 1950's and 1960's:

> . . . the mass of the African populations, both in rural and urban areas, seem to me to have lost ground overall. To be sure, there have been some visible improvements in their lot: the humiliations of legal discriminations have ended; primary schooling has expanded enormously; health conditions have improved, though spottily; and a small segment of the mass has moved upward into the middle class. But there is another side to the ledger. The twin phenomena of ecological exhaustion and population increase have resulted in massive starvation in parts of rural Africa. And malnutrition is endemic among the ever-expanding ranks of effectively landless and jobless urban residents or squatters.[8]

In sum, the early years of African independence demonstrated the pervasiveness of change on the African continent, particularly violent, destabilizing change. Unfortunately, this change has been more destructive than constructive. As Manfred Halpern has noted in his introductory essay to the Rockefeller Commission study, *Africa: From Mystery to Maze:*

> Africans are entering into a great breaking. Relationships established yesterday or millennia ago are being shattered. Nobody thought that the first decades of independence would be easy. But the era of great breaking was believed by most to have been accomplished when almost all Africans freed themselves from colonialism. The next phase was foreseen as a time of making, not breaking . . . To trust and care in the midst of a great breaking is the most difficult and most necessary task confronting us all in the modern age. It means moving beyond the drifting and bargaining and the moments of seeming stability to acknowledge this crisis openly . . . with all its great dangers and opportunities.[9]

PRESENT TRENDS AND FUTURE CHANGE

The primary political force in Africa today, and for the foreseeable future, is what is often referred to as "African

nationalism." This is the force which drives African solidarity and generates African demands for political and economic equality among the nations of the world. It also demands respect for the dignity and sovereignty of African nations; the end to colonization in Southern Africa and apartheid in South Africa; a limit to foreign influence in African affairs, whether from the West, from the USSR or from China; and general adherence to the principles of nonalignment in international fora. Nonalignment is the international dress of African nationalism, as it is also a cloak of convenience for individual countries which are not wholly or convincingly nonaligned.

At the other end of the political spectrum is the continued existence of tribalism or ethnicity. With the possible exception of Swaziland, Lesotho, Somalia, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, the nation-state does not yet exist in Africa; rather, most Africans tend to identify with a particular clan, tribe or other ethnic groups. As noted earlier, ethnicity has sparked conflict in the past and will continue to do so until the formation of true nation-states. Colin Legum provides a historic analogy:

> Africa is in a historical period analogous to the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries in Europe—a time of volatile instability and political change. Moreover, Africa probably has a greater degree of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic pluralism than any other continent; so the process of nation making here is more complex and potentially more disruptive than elsewhere. Institutional breakdown, disorder, and political experimentation—all typical elements in the formative period of the nation-state—have been the dominant characteristics of the political process in much of Africa during the 1960's and 1970's and will continue to be so in the 1980's.[10]

Ethnic cleavages are aggravated by the artificality of the African borders which were drawn up in Berlin in 1884-85. In some cases an ethnic group finds itself divided among several countries, incorporated with traditional enemies within a country, or a combination of both. Given these circumstances, the eruption of ethnic conflict is not surprising.

Ali Mazrui cites one type of conflict as the "effort to define the proper boundaries of a political community."[11] It manifests itself by the attempt of one group to secede and a resultant civil war. Such was the case during the Anyanya Rebellion in the Sudan, the Katangan secession from the then Congo, and the short lifespan of the breakaway state of Biafra. A current example is in Ethiopia

where several ethnic groups are waging wars of independence from that ancient empire.

Mazrui identifies a second type of ethnic conflict as "redefining the purpose and policies of a political community whose boundaries are acceptable to the contenders."[12] While he uses the Spanish Civil War as an example, a better, African case may be the ongoing conflict in Angola where it appears that Jonas Savimbi's Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) is not attempting to secede, but rather to assure the proper place of its ethnic group in governing Angola within its established borders. Similarly, the eventual conflict in the Republic of South Africa is more apt to be of this variety than one of secession, since secession of a tribal group would ultimately deprive them of the vast resources to be gained from majority rule.

Colin Legum describes a third type of ethnic conflict as one of "expansionist nationalism." Examples are Somali irredentism and Moroccan attempts to integrate a portion of the former Spanish Sahara into a greater Morocco.

In many cases, it is difficult to affix any of the above labels to a particular conflict. For example, in the Ogaden Desert the Western Somali Liberation Front has been waging a war of secession for several years; however, when Somalia invaded the region in 1977 to assist the Front, that was a war of expansionist nationalism. Notwithstanding definitional problems, virtually every country and region in Africa today has similar ethnic cleavages which can erupt at any moment. Moreover, despite Organization of African Unity (OAU) espousal of the sanctity of existing borders, recent trends indicate an increasing propensity toward armed violations of these borders, which will be discussed later in this paper.

Another political trend is a growing sense of responsibility among African states for African solutions to African problems without involving external intervention. This has both encouraging and worrisome features.

On the one hand there is what *Washington Post* correspondent David Ottaway has termed "discernible African awakening to the long avoided issue of human rights."[13] Former Deputy Assistant Secretary Cohen cited three examples:

> This new consciousness is evident in a number of concrete developments: first, in the building of a pan-African legal and institutional structure for the

protection of internationally recognized human rights; second, in the fall from power of three African rulers—in Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, and the Central African Empire (C.A.E.)—who were particularly repressive; third, in the movement of a number of African nations toward constitutional rule under civilian governments.[14]

This changing attitude toward human rights has several implications. By its very nature a dictatorship such as that of Idi Amin causes internal and regional instability. If the chances of another Amin coming to power are, in fact, lessened by this growing awareness of human rights, the chances of conflict along the lines of the Uganda-Tanzania clash should also be reduced.

The recent return of the military to the barracks in Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, and Upper Volta is also encouraging and reflects the growing realization by the military of its inability to solve the complex social, economic, and political problems facing Africa today. Not that these problems are any more easily solved by a civilian government, but in the long run a truly participatory democracy is probably the solution to the ethnic cleavages discussed earlier.

The recent coup in Liberia with its subsequent brutal executions and the coup in Uganda may be cited to refute this trend toward increased concern over human rights, but hopefully these are isolated aberrations and not a counter-trend. In any case they do indicate that the road will not be easy, and such incidents are apt to occur again.

On the other hand, this trend toward African solutions for African problems has resulted in increased interference on the part of some African states in the affairs of their neighbors. The prime example, of course, is the Tanzanian invasion of Uganda and the resulting overthrow of Idi Amin. While most observers have applauded the overthrow of Amin, the continued presence of Tanzanian troops on Ugandan soil remains bothersome to many. Other examples include the unrequested and unannounced arrival of Guinean forces in Liberia during the 1979 Easter riots and the Nigerian use of the oil weapon against the excesses of the Rawlings regime in Ghana and the various factions in the Chadian dispute.

While technically not a trend, Africa will face several political succession crises in the coming decade. What I. William Zartman terms the "Independence Generation" of the "Class of 1918," that is, those leaders who participated in the struggle for independence and became the initial heads of state still rule today in many

African countries.[15] These leaders include among others Senghor in Senegal, Houphouet-Boigny in Ivory Coast, Ahidjo in Cameroon, Kaunda in Zambia, Banda in Malawi and Bourguiba in Tunisia. Most of these heads of state can be expected to leave the scene in the 1980's, in many cases with no preparation for an orderly transfer of power. While Kenya has successfully passed through a succession crisis recently, others may not be as lucky. Suppressed tribal rivalries and economic frustrations often lie beneath a thin veneer of apparent tranquility. The potential for conflict, military involvement, or external intervention is high during these imminent successions. On the other hand, if the transitions are made smoothly, the new leaders will probably be far superior than their predecessors. As a group they are better educated, more technically oriented, more concerned with development, less ethnically motivated, and more democratically inclined[16]—all of which augurs well for their countries if they are allowed to assume power.

A final political trend is the continuing quest for the attainment of majority rule in Southern Africa, probably the only issue on which black Africa stands united. This will result in increasing pressure on the United States and the West to modify their South African policies. The Nigerian nationalization of British Petroleum assets in Nigeria over that company's oil sales to South Africa is a prime example.

The primary economic trend is one of increasing disparities between the "haves" and the "have-nots," both within a particular country and among different countries. Professor Andrew M. Karmack has predicted, for example, that:

> Africa's leading trends and problems in 1985 should differ little from those of 1975, except that most of them will be more acute. The problems of urbanization—growth of slums, traffic-choked streets, "unemployed"—will be even greater than in 1975. Population growth rates are likely to be even higher, since death rates will have continued to decline while birthrates, at best, will be only beginning to dip.[17]

There are several factors that will contribute to this economic deterioration. While population pressures are not as severe as in some parts of Asia, Africa's population is growing more rapidly than any other region of the world with birthrates of 47 per thousand compared to 37 per thousand in Latin America and 19 per thousand in the West.[18] In many cases what economic growth has occurred is eroded by this natural increase.

In turn much of the population is now flocking to the cities resulting in severe urbanization problems. Lagos is a good case in point. Its population in 1950 was 250,000; by 1970 this had swelled to 2.1 million; and the projected figure for 2000 is 9.4 million.[19] Such urban growth rates have severely strained the capacities of African governments resulting in sprawling squatter settlements virtually devoid of public utilities and basic social services. Such urbanization problems were a key factor in the 1979 Easter riots in Monrovia and the eventual coup in April 1980.

Many African countries which were once self-sufficient in foodstuffs can no longer feed their people. There are several reasons for this situation such as inefficient systems of production, lack of infrastructure, and a shift to cash crops for export; the primary culprits, however, appear to be rapid urbanization and mounting population growth. In any case the result has been to force more and more states to expend scarce foreign exchange simply for food imports. The International Food Policy Research Institute estimates a total grain shortfall for Africa of 14-15 million tons by 1985-86.[20] To cite the Liberian example again, the price of rice, mainly imported, was another factor in the Easter riots of last year.

Increase of desert areas compounds the problem of self-sufficiency in food products. The drought in the Sahel Region during 1968-1974 first brought this problem to the world's attention. Because of the drought seven million West Africans were totally dependent on food donations in 1974.[21] Although conditions have somewhat abated in the Sahel, desert growth continues with some scientists estimating that the Sahara is encroaching upon arable lands at a rate of 5,000 square miles per year. Closely associated with this problem is deforestation. *Africa Report* estimates that in Ghana 50,000 hectares of woodland are denuded each year by both commercial logging operations and gatherers of fire wood. The figure for the Ivory Coast is 400,000 hectares.[22] The ultimate environmental impact of such losses are unknown, but soil erosion and climactic changes are probably inevitable.

This economic instability, coupled with political instability, has resulted in huge numbers of migrants and refugees throughout the continent. As the State Department has reported:

Armed conflict, civil strife, systematic oppression, and drought have generated millions of refugees and displaced persons on the African continent, particularly in the Horn and in southern Africa. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that as of December 1979 there were about 2.2 million refugees in Africa, of whom some 1.7 million required substantial aid. Other estimates range as high as 4 million refugees and displaced persons. The need to provide assistance to refugees places an immense burden on the 26 African nations which together are hosts to the largest number of refugees in the world.[23]

The nation hardest hit by this influx is Somalia whose refugee population was expected to reach 1.2 million by the end of 1980. Sudan has almost a half million refugees, mostly Eritreans.[24] Migrants pose additional problems. For example, possibly 50 percent of the population of the Ivory Coast are migrants from Upper Volta, Mali, and other poorer countries in West Africa.

As noted above, deteriorating economic conditions contributed to the recent upheavals in Liberia. Similarly they were primarily responsible for civil unrest leading to coups in Niger, Chad, and Ethiopia in the mid-1970's. In some instances this instability was based on tribal lines, but there is a trend toward increasing "class" conflict whereby tribal animosities are temporarily waived and the battle is joined between the "haves and have-nots." Given the current world economic situation the problem is going to get worse before it gets better.

Within the various African military establishments, the trends are toward an increased number of men under arms, increased firepower, and increased mobility, fueled mainly by large increases in Soviet arms sales over the past 5 years. Such quantitative increases do not necessarily indicate an increase in the quality of the armed force, for many African armies still suffer from poor logistics capabilities and lack of skilled personnel. Nevertheless, the Somali invasion of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia in 1977 and the Tanzanian invasion of Uganda last year represent a quantum leap in military capabilities on the continent, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. This overall increase in military capabilities is apt to have two consequences.

Domestically, it will improve the coercive power of the State in coping with internal threats. If used judiciously and sparingly, the use of the military may aid in the development process. On the other hand, overly repressive measures could exacerbate instability as appears to be the case in Eritrea. In addition, the propensity for

African military establishments to involve themselves in domestic politics will continue throughout the coming decade. Certainly the history of military rule in Nigeria and Ghana is not far from the minds of the recently elected civilian leaders in those countries. Similarly, the ease with which Master Sergeant Doe took control of Liberia is a lesson carefully noted by the ruling elites throughout the continent.

Externally, the potential for armed conflict between African neighbors is increased, notwithstanding OAU prohibitions to the contrary. The Uganda-Tanzania and Ethiopia-Somalia cases are prime examples. A similar war between Morocco and Algeria over the Western Sahara conflict is another potential example. Greater mobility and firepower also give more credence to some form of coalition warfare against the Republic of South Africa. Given the dependence of African nations on either the East or the West for arms, any such conflicts in the future increase the chances of the superpowers being drawn in as well.

Finally, in addition to the political, economic, and military trends on the continent of Africa itself, there are international trends which will also have an impact there over the next decade.

- The most worrisome would appear to be the emergence of Soviet power projection capabilities and the use of "proxies" in Angola and Ethiopia. While it is still not clear if Moscow has gained a "victory" in these two cases, its demonstrated capacity to intervene rapidly, massively, and decisively has to influence the decisions and actions of both the Africans and the West.
- Similarly, while the exact nature of the US military access on the East coast of Africa has not yet been determined pending on-going negotiations, even a minor US military presence on the continent will complicate the African equation.
- The often overlooked, former colonial powers will also retain the capability to influence, or even to intervene in, events in Africa throughout the 1980's. This is particularly true of France, with its relatively large contingent of both military advisers and troops throughout the continent. The French role in the overthrow of Emperor Bokassa I is a case in point.

In summary, the present trends point to a decade of increasing economic woes and political instability, leading to conflicts. More capable armed forces will have the capacity to increase the scope of these conflicts. This, combined with a growing propensity toward

intervention in African affairs by both East and West, increases the danger of internationalization of African crises and of superpower confrontation on the continent.

THE ISSUES OF THE 1980's

In effect, the trends listed and analyzed above constitute important issues which will impact on US interests in Africa in the 1980's and which must be carefully considered in determining policy toward that immense, diverse continent. As the analysis has attempted to demonstrate, these trends are primarily negative and worthy of attempts to reverse them in their own right despite the fact that they are often highly complex and intricately interrelated to the point that they defy easy resolution. Beyond this, however, Africa in the 1980's will present the United States with other issues which, although they include several of these trends, transcend them in importance because of their global implications. While Africanists do not completely agree on the exact number of such issues and label them somewhat differently, the following discussion will focus on three which appear to be common to the literature, namely:[25]

- Ocean Politics and East-West competition.
- Racial Confrontation and Southern Africa.
- Resources and the North-South Competition.

Ocean Politics and East-West Competition.

There is little doubt that the Soviet Union views Africa as a legitimate arena for low-risk competition with the West outside the bounds of detente. The most visible and effective instruments of Soviet policy are, and will continue to be, military.

Arms sales are the heart of Soviet military programs on the continent. Sub-Saharan Africa alone received almost half of all Soviet arms transfers to the Third World in 1978. This compared to a figure of 5 percent prior to 1975.[26] It has already been noted that this is a factor in the trend toward increased militarization of Africa. The experiences of Angola and Ethiopia demonstrate that not only does the Soviet Union sell arms to Africa, but it can also deliver them anywhere on the continent, in massive quantities, and in an expeditious manner.

Closely allied with Soviet arms sales is technical training. Because of a dearth of skilled manpower in African military establishments, Soviet, East European, and Cuban military technicians are often required for long periods of time. They not only train indigenous personnel, but in many cases they actually operate and maintain this equipment themselves.

Finally, the Soviets have demonstrated that they can even provide combat forces, in the form of Cubans, and command and staff elements for the conduct of actual combat operations.

These Soviet military programs in Africa are designed to increase political leverage on the recipient; to gain access to port and air facilities; and, in many instances, to acquire hard currencies for the benefit of the Soviet Union. Probably the most important of these motives is military access. As Robert Legvold points out:

> . . . the Soviet Union's apparent eagerness to secure the use of an even larger number of facilities wherever the remotest possibility exists—from Portugal to Mozambique—adds further evidence that it intends to have military power readily at hand in areas like Africa.[2]

This strategy is not going to be abandoned, for as noted by Colin Legum:

> it would require nothing short of a major reversal of Gorshkov's strategy for the Soviets to lose interest in any of these areas (the Horn, Southern Africa, the bulge of West Africa, and the southern littoral of the Mediterranean) . . .[3]

With the exception of covert support for the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) during the Angolan Civil War and possibly the logistics support provided Zaire during Shaba I and II, the United States has chosen not to compete militarily with the Soviets on the continent. However, recent events in the Middle East and South Asia have demonstrated the weakness of the US military presence in the Indian Ocean and along its littoral. This, in turn, has prompted a frantic search for bases and access rights of our own. While the exact nature of the *quid pro quo* has not yet been detemined, US security assistance will undoubtedly be a major portion of the package.

Given the trends discussed previously, the expansion of East-West competition to Africa is likely to have the following impacts.

• Exacerbate deteriorating economic conditions. Soviet military aid is not free; many of their clients are finding themselves locked into long term repayment schedules, either in cash or by barter, which are greatly straining their economies. Similarly, given the current economic situation in the United States and the current mood of the Congress, US aid is becoming less and less free.

• Frustrate US arms control efforts. Unilateral restraint on the part of the United States has not been particularly successful in stemming arms races in Africa since the Soviet Union appears to have no compunctions about whom it will sell arms to. In fact, US reluctance to provide weapons to a country has often driven that country into a military relationship with the Soviet Union.

• Make the US hostage to internal or regional events in those areas in which the United States establishes a military presence. For example, the need for the communications and intelligence-gathering site at Kagnew Station in Ethiopia intimately linked the United States with the autocratic regime of Haile Selassie and with his counterinsurgency efforts in the province of Eritrea where the facility was located.

• And finally, an increased US military presence on the continent would appear not only to risk US military involvement in African conflicts, but also confrontation with the proxies of the Soviet Union and possibly the Soviet Union itself.

Racial Confrontation in Southern Africa.

The most dangerous of the possible conflicts will be the continued struggle for majority rule in Southern Africa. While a scenario for a peaceful transition to majority rule can be developed, Colin Legum warns that "it is difficult to see how the communal and other types of conflict in this important region—especially in the Republic of South Africa—can be resolved without violence or international involvement."[29]

The Angolan Civil War provides a vivid example of how majority rule was attained in that country at considerable risk to detente and world peace. While it is true that majority rule was attained in Zimbabwe under conditions considerably different from the Angolan civil war scenario many had predicted, there is no guarantee that Angola will not be repeated in Namibia or South Africa. Or, for that matter, that civil war will not suddenly erupt in Zimbabwe, where the euphoria of independence is beginning to

wane and the harsh realities of ethnic and economic problems are being recognized.

While one can safely predict that there will be an independent Namibia assuming its seat at the United Nations during the coming decade, the same cannot be said for a black-ruled nation of Azania taking over the seat now held by the white regime of the Republic of South Africa. But for every delay in the evolution toward majority rule in South Africa the chances for violent upheaval increase.

This potential racial confrontation in South Africa poses several acute dilemmas for the United States. On the one hand there is the humanitarian interest in eliminating white minority rule and the gross abuses it has perpetrated. On the other is a series of other interests: US and Western trade and investment in South Africa; minerals; South Africa's strategic position along the vital Cape route; and the perception by some of a strong, anti-Communist South Africa stemming the steady encroachment of Marxism throughout the continent.

While these conflicting interests have resulted in an ambivalent US policy toward Southern Africa, the Soviet Union has shown no such hesitancy in exploiting the struggle for majority rule. Mazuri has observed that "on balance it could be argued that the Soviet Union has so far been at least a decade ahead of the USA in understanding the forces at work . . ."[10] As a result, the Soviet Union and its Cuban and East European allies have become the recognized champions of the various liberation movements in Southern Africa. According to former Nigerian head of state, General Mustala Mohammed:

> We are all aware of the heroic role which the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries have played in the struggle of the African peoples for liberation. The Soviet Union and other Socialist countries have been our traditional suppliers of arms to resist oppression and to fight for national liberation and human dignity.[11]

In this context, as former National Security Adviser Brezinski has been quoted as saying, the point of disaster comes "when white women being raped by black guerrillas wearing red stars on their armbands start appearing on nightly television news."[12] Given the myriad of complex, and often conflicting US interests in Southern Africa, the consequences appear ominous.

Resources and the North-South Dialogue.

The current dependence of the United States on oil and mineral imports has been well documented. While this dependence can be reduced through stockpiling, substitutes, alternative sources, etc., the long lead times required to implement these new procedures indicates that our dependence on the resources of Africa will not be greatly alleviated during the coming decade.

There are two means by which the supply of these vital imports could be interrupted. First, instability could make it physically impossible to extract and/or transport the material, such as occurred during the Shaba I and II invasions. Secondly a hostile government could deliberately curtail the supply for its own political reasons. The use of Cuban troops to protect Gulf Oil installations in Angola seems to belie this latter hypothesis, for as William Foltz argues:

> In thinking about the long term, one historic precedent is unambiguous; so far, at least, no regime anywhere in Africa, of any ideological or dermatological pigmentation, has refused to sell the United States any valuable mineral it produces when offered something like the ongoing international commodity price.[13]

Nevertheless, the prospect of, say, a Nigerian embargo on oil exports to the United States over US policy in Southern Africa is a frightening proposition. The point is that the United States needs a reliable supply of Africa's mineral and petroleum resources during the next decade.

On the other hand, the Africa nations themselves are even more dependent on the exports of their various raw materials, often on one or two key products in a particular country. However, the vagaries of the international market have often proved disastrous. Witness the impact of the severe drop of phosphate prices on Morocco in the mid 1970's and of copper prices on Zaire and Zambia. As a result of this and the previously discussed downward economic trends, the Africans are becoming more vocal in their demands for a so-called New International Economic Order (NIEO). While Africa lacks sufficient weapons to enforce these demands, it appears that the United States could be more forthcoming in voluntarily meeting some of them. For example, implementation of various commodity prices stabilization schemes could be mutually beneficial, providing the United States with a

guaranteed supply of necessary commodities and the exporter with a guaranteed market and a fair profit. Other long-range spin-offs of the NIEO could presumably be improved economic conditions with Africa and greater political stability.

It is within the North South dialogue that the Soviets, much to their dismay, find themselves increasingly linked with the richer nations of the North in the discussions over the New International Economic Order. Admittedly constrained in their economic relations with sub-Saharan Africa by domestic considerations and a lack of "surplus capital," the Soviets simply cannot provide the economic assistance required by Africa over the next decade, and the Africans are beginning to recognize this. As *New York Times* correspondent Michael T. Kaufman reported from the UNCTAD IV Conference in Nairobi in 1976:

> They [The Africans] resent the Soviet Union's standing aloof from such questions and insisting that the world economic disarray is a consequence of capitalist contradiction over which it has no control and for which it bears no responsibility.[14]

It is in the area of economic assistance that the United States and its allies have the best advantage to deter Soviet activities. On the rhetorical level, the USSR has given its qualified indorsement of the call for a NIEO. In practice, however, it has done very little. US actions, which not only highlight the inconsistency between Soviet actions and words on the NIEO issue but also demonstrate a US commitment to help, will go a long way toward insuring a mutually beneficial North-South dialogue.

CONCLUSION

Change will be endemic to Africa in the 1980's. In many cases, it will be gradual following the trends outlined earlier. In other cases, it will be sudden and dramatic such as the recent coup in Liberia. In many instances, these changes will be more destructive than constructive, providing serious challenges for the United States. However, the United States to date has demonstrated only a limited capacity, or willingness, to meet these challenges, preferring to rely mainly on the former colonial powers to protect US interests. In part, this is because the United States has never defined its interests in Africa as "vital" to national security. As a result, in the words

of General Palmer, "the United States has not had a cohesive, consistent policy toward sub-Saharan Africa. An overall American policy gap exists, as well as a US military policy and planning vacuum."[35]

The trends for the 1980's, however, indicate that Africa will become more important to US interests, especially as the East-West competition becomes superimposed over the rest of Africa's problems. It is imperative that the United States close the policy gap and begin taking the initiative in helping to resolve the dangerous issues ahead rather than reacting to Soviet openings as has been the case over the past few years. These policies must stress political and economic solutions, for it is the development of stable economic and political institutions in Africa which will eventually reverse the ominous trends predicted for this decade. Furthermore, it is in the areas of nation-building that the United States has the advantage over the Soviet Union, even if it has not always demonstrated the will to commit the necessary resources. While the military instruments of foreign policy should not be ignored, they must be used judiciously and selectively to complement US economic and political initiatives, not merely to counter Soviet moves. Above all the United States must be patient—there are no short term solutions to the myriad of Africa's problems. As Helen Kitchen warns:

> U.S. policy makers and kibitzers need to recognize that the fate of any African country will not be determined by the outcome of any single crisis or the rise or fall of any particular "pro-Soviet" or "pro-Western" leader. Africa must travel a long road as it seeks out its ultimate post-colonial and post-neocolonial identity. It is a road that will be crisscrossed by many experimental short cuts that will dead-end and be abandoned. American policy should be based on the premise that Africa is not about to be won—or lost—by anybody.[36]

ENDNOTES

1. Stephen B. Cohen, *Statement of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Rights before the Subcommittees on Africa and on International Organizations of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs*, p. 3.
2. I. William Zartman, "Social and Political Trends in Africa in the 1980's," in *Africa in the 1980's: A Continent in Crisis*, ed. by Colin Legum, *et al.*, p. 69.
3. Bruce Palmer, Jr., "US Security Interests and Africa South of the Sahara," *AEI Defense Review*, Vol. 2, No. 6, 1978, p. 7.
4. Waldemar A. Nielson, *The Great Powers & Africa*, p. 13.
5. As quoted in Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore, *Africa Since 1800*, pp. 275-76.
6. Ali Mazrui, *Africa's International Relations: The Diplomacy or Dependency & Change*, p. 31.
7. Ali Mazrui, "The Anatomy of Violence in Contemporary Black Africa," in *Africa: From Mystery to Maze*, ed. by Helen Kitchen, p. 49.
8. Phillippe Lemaitre, "Who Will Rule Africa by the Year 2000?," in *Africa: From Mystery to Maze*, ed. by Helen Kitchen, pp. 253-254.
9. Manfred Halpern, "Changing Connections to Multiple Worlds," in *Africa: From Mystery to Maze*, ed. by Helen Kitchen, pp. 9 and 39.
10. Colin Legum, "Communal Conflict and International Intervention in Africa," in *Africa in the 1980's: A Continent in Crisis*, ed. by Colin Legum, *et al.*, p. 23.
11. Mazrui, "The Anatomy of Violence in Contemporary Black Africa," p. 47.
12. *Ibid.*
13. David Ottaway, "Africa: US Policy Eclipse," *Foreign Affairs: America and the World 1979*, Vol. 58, No. 3, 1980, pp. 651-652.
14. Cohen, p. 2.
15. See Zartman, pp. 85-91 for a discussion of generational succession in Africa.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.
17. Andrew M. Karmack, "Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980's: An Economic Profile," in *Africa: From Mystery to Maze*, ed. by Helen Kitchen, p. 191.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
19. "World Population: The Silen Explosion - Part 2," *Department of State Bulletin*, November 1978, p. 3.
20. Guy F. Erb, "Africa and the International Economy: A US Response," in *Africa and the United States: Vital Interests*, ed. by Jennifer Seymour Whitaker, p. 67.
21. William A. Hance, "Lessons to be Learned from the Sahel Drought," in *Africa: From Mystery to Maze*, ed. by Helen Kitchen, p. 147.
22. Richard B. Ford, "Environment: Putting the Problems in Context," *Africa Report*, May-June 1978, p. 5.
23. "African Refugees," *Gist*, March 1980, p. 1.
24. *Ibid.*
25. These three issues are among the five pointed out by Colin Legum as "likely to keep Africa high on the agenda of international decision making in the 1980's."
26. National Foreign Assessment Center, *Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries 1978*, p. 21.

27. Robert Legvold, "The Soviet Union's Strategic Stake in Africa," in *Africa and the United States: Vital Interests*, ed. by Jennifer Seymour Whitaker, p. 159.
28. Legum, p. 50.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.
30. Mazrui, *Africa's International Relations*, p. 180.
31. As quoted in Colin Legum, *After Angola: The War Over Southern Africa*, p. 31.
32. As quoted in Clark A. Murdock, "Political and Military Dimensions of the African Problem, 1980-2000" in *The Sixth National Security Affairs Conference 1979 Proceedings*, p. 87.
33. *Ibid.* p. 82.
34. US Congress, House Committee on International Relations, *The Soviet Union and the Third World: A Watershed in Great Power Policy?*, p. 115.
35. Palmer, p. 42.
36. Helen Kitchen, "Eighteen African Guideposts," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1979-80, p. 86.

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This memorandum examines the dynamics of change in the African context. The author analyzes present trends and projects these trends through the decade of the 1980's, which will be a time of increasing economic woes and political instability throughout the African continent. The author sees three issues which will impact upon US interests in the coming decade: the expansion of East-West competition to Africa, racial confrontation in South Africa, and access to resources. He concludes that the United States must close the current gap in US policy toward Africa and take the initiative in resolving future issues.

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